

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 616
By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Reese Witherspoon
upon her reception of the 2006 Academy Award
for Best Actress in a Leading Role.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those gifted citizens who through their inherent talents and extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves in the performing arts as entertainers and actors; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Laura Jean Reese Witherspoon, who was born March 22, 1976, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is the second child born to Dr. John Witherspoon, a military surgeon, and Betty Witherspoon, a Registered Nurse; she spent the first few years of her life in Wiesbaden, Germany, where her father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserves, but shortly after her fourth birthday the family moved back to the United States, settling in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Reese Witherspoon was introduced to the entertainment industry when she began modeling at age seven, which led to appearances in several local television commercials; at age eleven, she placed first in a Ten-State Talent Fair; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Witherspoon's first role was in a 1991 made-for-TV movie called *Wildflower*, directed by Diane Keaton and starring Beau Bridges, William McNamara, and Patricia Arquette. That same year, at age 14, Witherspoon attended an open casting call for *The Man in the Moon*, intending to audition as a bit player; she was instead cast in the lead role and immediately captured the attention of critics and garnered rave reviews; and

WHEREAS, following her high school graduation in 1994 from Harpeth Hall, a college preparatory school for girls in Nashville, Reese Witherspoon's collegiate plans were put on hold when she accepted roles to star in two 1996 major motion pictures: *Fear*, alongside Mark Wahlberg, and *Freeway*, with Kiefer Sutherland; both films helped to establish her as a rising

starlet in Hollywood and opened the door to bigger and better film roles, such as 1998's *Pleasantville* and *Cruel Intentions* in 1999; and

WHEREAS, during the last fifteen years, Ms. Witherspoon has continued to build an impressive filmography, playing both comedic and dramatic roles, including performances as Vanessa in *Freeway*, Tracy Flick in *Election*, for which she earned a Golden Globe nomination, and the voice of the animated character Greta Wolfecastle in an episode of *The Simpsons*. She earned her second Golden Globe nomination and achieved fame for her role as Elle Woods in 2001's *Legally Blonde*; this career-making film and its sequel, *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde*, were both huge box-office hits and established her as one of Hollywood's most highly paid actresses and a top female draw; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Witherspoon achieved a follow-up hit with *Sweet Home Alabama* in 2002, which has grossed more than \$100 million dollars at the box office; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, June Carter Cash personally selected Reese Witherspoon to play her role in an upcoming film based on the life of her husband, country music icon, Johnny Cash. Today, Reese Witherspoon has garnered critical praise and collected a bevy of prestigious awards, including the coveted Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role, for her turn as June Carter Cash in *Walk the Line*; and

WHEREAS, Reese Witherspoon sang professionally for the first time in this movie, and for her stunning performance in the role of June Carter Cash she has also been honored with a Golden Globe award, British Academy's BAFTA award, Boston Society of Film Critics award, Broadcast Film Critics Association award, National Society of Film Critics award, Online Film Critics Society award, New York Film Critics Circle award, San Francisco Film Critics Circle award, Satellite award, Screen Actors Guild award, and the 2006 People's Choice Award as Favorite Leading Lady; and

WHEREAS, her extraordinary performances, petite beauty, and genteel Southern charm have served to make Reese Witherspoon a familiar and formidable presence in American cinema; she truly serves as an inspiration to her peers, her fans, and her community; and

WHEREAS, her professional accomplishments aside, Reese Witherspoon is also deeply devoted to her family, and always endeavors to remain true to family values of the highest

order; she is most grateful for the love and support of her devoted husband, actor Ryan Phillippe, to whom she was married in 1999, and her two beautiful children, Ava Elizabeth and Deacon, and

WHEREAS, the Phillippe-Witherspoon family maintains a home in Los Angeles, California, and both Ryan and Reese remain in close touch with their parents and extended families. Reese Witherspoon is fiercely proud of her Southern roots, and never fails to mention her Tennessee background when speaking with the press; the first words of her Oscar acceptance speech were, "I never thought I'd be here in my whole life, growing up in Tennessee"; and

WHEREAS, Reese Witherspoon is one of the most hard-working and electric performers in her trade. In addition to acting, she is also a producer with her own production company, called "Type A Films" in honor of her childhood nickname; she served as executive producer for *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde*, and currently has three films pending for which she serves as producer; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Witherspoon epitomizes the spirit and dedication that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; her commitment to excellence in her profession serves as a model and inspiration to those who seek to follow her; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Reese Witherspoon for her career of outstanding contributions to the American screen, as well as her charitable and business activities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Reese Witherspoon, a woman of great integrity and exceptional creative spirit, for her notable and praiseworthy achievements and excellence in cinema, congratulate her for her reception of the 2006 Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role, and extend to her our best wishes for every future success and satisfaction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

